

Budget Workshop
August 19, 2003

The Freeport City Council met for a workshop at 7:00pm on August 19, 2003.

Mayor Marse opened the third budget workshop meeting.

Members Present: Mayor J.M. Marse, Council members, Earl King, Jean Arrant, Janice McLean, Mike Helton and Scott Brannon. Also present Clerk Riley and bookkeeper Robin Haynes.

Councilman Helton gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Clerk Riley stated that Waren Mann was taken to the hospital for an injury to his right wrist. It appears that it is just sprung and he was instructed to rest for a couple of days.

Bridgett Hilgenberg gave her written resignation for the sewer plant operator. Effective on August 29, 2003.

Councilman King told the Council that the water budget for water is in the \$1,035,750.00 range.

The general fund resumed with the Fire Department budget. Councilwoman McLean addressed a part time employment of 3 people. The starting wage would be \$8.00 per hour with no benefits. Councilman King addressed his proposed increase of employees' wages at around \$1.00 to bring up the base rates. He wants to have a starting wage rate of \$7.50 per hour. Councilman King estimated his salary expenditures to be around \$250,000 in the water department. He also expressed the positive response he received about a paid fire department. Councilman Brannon asked who would be the boss of these employees at the fire department. Councilwoman McLean stated they would be under the direction of her, the chief and assistant chief. Councilwoman Arrant was concerned that the City may have a liability of providing benefits for fire fighters. Assistance Chief James Odom will check into it. Each line item was addressed and itemized in the Fire Department. Council moved into the street department budget and then into the library department. Mayor Marse would like to buy streetlights for the parking lots around the governments buildings. The final department was the recreation and parks department. Councilwoman Arrant requested the budget stay the same as last years.

Intense discussion about the retirement contribution ensued. Mayor Marse wants to see about a plan that the employee has to contribute and then the City will match up to 3%.

Mayor Marse talked about the pool construction. Suggestions were made that the Mayor go to the County and ask for assistance.

The estimated budget for the general fund is \$644,151.00 for year of 2003-2004.

Motion to adjourn at 9:30 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

J.M. Marse, Mayor

Diane Riley, City Clerk

Janice McLean, President of Council